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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/874,276 06/06/01 NINOMIYA

T 396.40193X00

EXAMINER

020457 HM22/0905
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1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET
ARLINGTON VA 22209

STEGEL, A	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1621
DATE MAILED:

09/05/01

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/874,276

Applicant(s)

Ninomiya et al

Examiner

Alan Siegel

Art Unit

1621

– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) ☐ Other: ____

Art Unit: 1621

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Supplee et al (U.S. Patent 5,948,943) in view of Palmer et al (U.S. Patent 3,956,406).

Supplee et al disclose a process wherein an aliphatic aldehyde included by the instantly claimed process is reacted with formaldehyde to produce trimethylolpropane. The product stream is fed to a distillation column wherein it is concentrated and subsequently fed to an extraction zone. The extract is then separated into an oil phase and aqueous phase and the product is recovered (See the Abstract).

Palmer et al disclose a process wherein trimethylolpropane is produced from formaldehyde and an aliphatic aldehyde included by the instantly claimed process. The trimethylolpropane is recovered in an extraction zone and an extraction solvent is chosen from "any solvent which is immiscible in the trimethylolpropane containing aqueous alkaline process stream, which possess a strong affinity for TMP and which can be conveniently separated".

The use of the instantly claimed extraction solvent in the process of Supplee et al would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art because it would be within the skill of the ordinary artisan to determine through routine experimentation which solvents have the physical characteristics required. The

instantly claimed process generically includes the aliphatic aldehyde starting material as the extraction solvent. It would be immediately apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that the use of the aldehyde starting material as extraction solvent would be desirable, because of its availability, if it possessed the required physical characteristics set forth by Palmer et al. As pointed out above, such a determination would be routine and is given no patentable significance.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alan Siegel whose telephone number is 703 308-4692. The examiner can normally be reached on 5:30 AM to 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Johann Richter can be reached on 703 308-4532. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703 308-4556 for regular communications and 703 308-4556 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308-1235.


Alan Siegel
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1621

AMS
August 31, 2001